

**General Assembly**

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Report of the Peacebuilding Commission

Programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009

Financing field missions of the Peacebuilding Commission**Note by the Secretary-General***Summary*

At its 3rd meeting, on 2 November 2007, the General Committee of the General Assembly considered a request dated 18 October 2007 by the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/62/493) that item 10 of the agenda of the sixty-second session of the Assembly, entitled "Report of the Peacebuilding Commission", be allocated to the Fifth Committee for the sole purpose of considering the question of financing field missions of the Commission. At that meeting, the General Committee decided to recommend to the Assembly that the item be allocated to the Fifth Committee for that purpose.

To facilitate the review of the Fifth Committee and without prejudice to any decision to be taken by the Committee and the Peacebuilding Commission, the present report contains information on the preliminary estimated cost of field visits to be undertaken by the Peacebuilding Commission during the biennium 2008-2009, amounting to \$676,300.



I. Overview

1. In the resolutions establishing the Peacebuilding Commission (General Assembly resolution 60/180, para. 4, and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), para. 4), it was decided that the Commission should have a standing Organizational Committee, responsible for developing its own rules of procedure and working methods. In its first year of operation, the Commission agreed that visits were an important component of its working methods and undertook such visits to the two countries on its agenda, namely Burundi and Sierra Leone.

2. Reflecting on the value of those field visits, the Commission noted in paragraph 43 of its first annual report to the General Assembly and the Security Council (A/62/137-S/2007/458) that as part of its working methods, it had decided to organize field missions to the countries under consideration, and in light of their usefulness for the work of the Commission, it intended to continue undertaking such missions. The Commission further noted that the General Assembly might wish to acknowledge the importance of field missions as a tool for dialogue and interaction with country-level stakeholders, as well as to assess the peacebuilding priorities first-hand. In that context, the Commission wished to bring to the attention of the Assembly the fact that the issue of the financing of such missions needed to be appropriately considered and that such consideration could include all options, taking into account the fact that the Commission was a new body.

3. At its 3rd meeting, on 2 November 2007, the General Committee of the General Assembly considered a request dated 18 October 2007 by the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed to the President of the General Assembly (A/62/493) that item 10 of the agenda of the sixty-second session of the Assembly, entitled "Report of the Peacebuilding Commission", be allocated to the Fifth Committee for the sole purpose of considering the question of financing field missions of the Commission. At that meeting, the General Committee decided to recommend to the Assembly that the item be allocated to the Fifth Committee for that purpose.

4. In accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the necessary statement of programme budget implications would have been submitted by the Secretary-General to the Peacebuilding Commission at the time the decision was taken to organize field missions to the countries under its consideration. However, in view of the allocation of the question of the financing of such missions to the Fifth Committee, the present note is submitted to facilitate the Committee's work in determining the best advice it may provide to the Peacebuilding Commission on the financing of field missions.

II. Financing field visits of the Peacebuilding Commission

5. Field visits have been judged to be valuable to the work of the Commission, and their importance is expected to increase as the Commission seeks to deepen its engagement with the countries under its consideration. In addition, the field visits are integral to the operations of the Commission, and their significance will grow over time as more countries are considered. In the first year of operation of the Commission, the field visits to Burundi and Sierra Leone were funded through a combination of self-financing by members and other earmarked contributions.

6. Given the potential increase in the number of countries on the agenda of the Commission in 2008 and 2009, the General Assembly may wish to consider more stable funding for field visits to ensure that visits to any country could be undertaken as and when decided by the Commission without any financial hindrance, in view of the integral nature of such visits as part of the mandated programme of work of the Commission, as well to maintain a consistent standard for all members of the Commission through a single source of financing.

III. Preliminary cost estimates

7. The preliminary cost estimates have been formulated on the basis of experience in 2007 and assumptions about the work programme of the Commission. Notably, in 2007 one trip was made by members of the Commission to Sierra Leone and Burundi, with six members travelling to both Freetown and to Bujumbura for seven days each for the purpose outlined in the related reports (PBC/1/SLE/2 and PBC/1/BDI/2).

8. In 2008, broadly following the experience of 2007, it is anticipated that one field visit a year will be undertaken by seven members of the Commission to each of the three countries under consideration, namely Burundi, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone. In 2009, it is expected that one field visit a year will be undertaken by seven members of the Commission to each of the three countries under consideration, plus to one country in Asia and a country in the Americas, for a total of five missions.

9. Furthermore, certain circumstances may warrant missions by the Chairman of a country-specific configuration to a country on the agenda of the Commission. During 2007, the Chairmen of the country-specific configurations for Burundi and Sierra Leone undertook such visits to follow up on critical peacebuilding issues. The cost estimates referred to in the present note assume that such visits will continue in 2008-2009.

10. On the basis of the above assumptions, a preliminary estimate of \$676,300 for the biennium 2008-2009 would cover airfare, daily subsistence allowance (plus 40 per cent in line with the allowance for comparable bodies) and terminal expenses in respect of field visits by members of the Commission. The cost estimate is based on the rules governing the payment of travel expenses and subsistence allowance in respect of members of organs or subsidiary organs of the United Nations (ST/SGB/107/Rev.6) in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1798 (XVII), as amended by resolutions 2128 (XX), 2245 (XXI), 2489 (XXIII), 2491 (XXIX), 41/176, 41/213, 42/214, 42/225, section VI, 43/217, section IX, and 45/248, section XIII. No provision for such visits was included in the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009, and as such the General Assembly may wish to consider accommodating them within the programme budget to the greatest extent possible and to report as necessary in the context of the performance reports.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

11. The present note is submitted to facilitate the work of the General Assembly in considering the financing of field missions of the Peacebuilding

Commission in line with paragraph 43 of the report of the Commission (A/62/137-S/2007/458).

12. It should be noted that in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the necessary statement of programme budget implications would have been submitted to the Peacebuilding Commission at the time the decision was taken to organize field missions to the countries under its consideration. However, in view of the allocation of the relevant agenda item directly to the Fifth Committee for the sole purpose of considering the question of financing such field missions, the Assembly may wish to advise the Commission, in addition to any other specific guidance it wishes to provide, that:

(a) Should the field visits be conducted during the biennium 2008-2009, the preliminary cost under the programme budget for the biennium would amount to \$676,300, to be absorbed to the greatest extent possible under section 3, Political affairs, and reported in the context of the performance reports;

(b) Any future requirements would be considered in the context of the proposed programme budget for the relevant biennium.